

FEDERATED PLAN RAPPED

The co-operative movement in Regina is becoming revitalized as a result of the recent strike at Regina Sherwood Co-operative Association.

Co-op members are now vitally concerned with the future of their association. What is considered by some members a move to "wipe out" the local co-ops, and deterioration of the democratic principles of co-operation has attracted the largest turnouts at Sherwood meetings in years.

The Committee of Concerned Co-operators called two meetings of Sherwood members in October to discuss the situation developing in Sherwood over the dispute between management and the workers. The dispute ended last week after a 50 day strike by 93 employees.

What had started out as an effort by the committee to bring about a fair and rapid settlement of the strike has turned into a much wider concern. The implications of Sherwood's relationship to the larger Federated Co-operatives Limited and the proposed Centr-

alized Retail Co-ops are concerning Regina members.

Stan Rands, an 18-year member of Sherwood, told the PRAIRIE FIRE that it was apparent from the meetings the members "are more concerned with the future of their own store."

These meetings, he said "are considered as a first step to revitalizing the co-op membership, to determine the direction their co-op is heading, and in which direction it should be heading.

The question of the Co-op's future was raised at the Oct. 22 meeting, attended by close to 400 members.

Also, the proposals say that the district directors elected would be the Board of Directors of both the CRC and Federated.

"In other words, the two organizations would have a common board."

Myron Kuziak, a Regina lawyer, referred to an article published Oct. 14 in the Co-operative Consumer, a Federated publication. The article outlined Federated's proposed Centralized Retail Co-ops, which Mr. Kuziak said "would compete with, and try to wipe-out consumer co-ops, including our own."

When one member present objected, stating this was just rumour, Mr. Rands read from a Federated document the definite proposals by Federated to establish the Central Retail Co-ops (CRC).

Part of the "Consumer" article read, "the hope would be that eventually it (CRC) would become a giant retailing organization serving the entire area" (western provinces).

"Who's hope?" asks Mr. Rands. "It is certainly not the 'hope' of members as they have not been involved in this."

The PRAIRIE FIRE contacted two members of Federated's Board of Directors for comment on the CRC. R. A. Johnson of Kindersly said that the proposal has been sent out to local boards for study. "It is just a proposal," he said, "nothing definite, just for discussion."

Mr. Johnson said that the proposal had been presented to the managers of local co-ops at the September Managers' Conference at Waski-

sieu. It wasn't until October that the local boards were presented with the proposal.

As many Sherwood members here consider this proposal to come under "policy", and should be decided only by local boards and membership, The PRAIRIE FIRE contacted Robert H. Boyes of Saskatoon, president of Federated.

He agreed that this was a policy matter and said that the proposal was just "tried on the managers for size to see if it fit." Federated, he said, just wanted to "get their feelings on it. They didn't think it was too bad" so it was presented to all the locals early in October, Mr. Boyes said.

It is the wording and structure of the CRC proposal, prepared by co-op managers, which is creating the concern among members.

According to the proposal when a retail co-op joins CRC, "its members would transfer to membership in CRC, and the assets and facilities of the retail would transfer to CRC ownership and operation."

Mr. Rands emphasized what was said at the October 22 meeting of co-op members in that this Federated proposal "would be the end of local co-ops."

He went on to say the proposal Federated makes is that "as a retail organization, CRC would become a member of Federated. How can local co-ops become members of Federated when they actually own Federated?"

Many Sherwood members at the meeting claimed that Federated management already has too much control in the local organizations.

RCMP CONTINUE INVESTIGATION

Action by the attorney-general's department on the Carl Harris beating is expected some time this week, The PRAIRIE FIRE has learned.

Mr. Harris, 23, of Regina charged that he was beaten by three members of the Regina City Police on Oct. 16, and left in a ditch outside the city. Part of the text of Mr. Harris' statutory declaration, which started the investigation, first appeared in last week's PRAIRIE FIRE.

Last week, RCMP attempted to have an identification line-up of city police members, but on the advice of a lawyer and senior police administrators, the police refused to take part voluntarily.

However, sources say the line-up is not necessary in order for the RCMP to complete their investigation.

As soon as the report is completed it will go to the provincial attorney general's department.

Provincial Attorney-General D.V. Heald said his office would decide whether to prosecute the case after studying the report.

"We are proceeding on this case just as we would with any other," Mr. Heald said. "We are waiting for the RCMP report now. However, we do not keep in day-to-day contact with them, so we can make no comment as to how long the investigation will take."

Mr. Harris, in his statement taken to Mr. Heald's department, said he suffered a broken or cracked nose bruises to his face and back and an eye hemorrhage from a beating he received on a de-

serted country road east of the city.

The investigation is being handled by the RCMP because the alleged incident took place outside the city limits, and also because of the seriousness of the charge.

VIETNAM WAR PROTEST PLANNED

The Regina "End the War in Vietnam" activities will be part of a Canada-wide series of demonstrations which will be paralleled on a larger scale across the United States.

The November Demonstrations follow on the October 15th Moratorium which was the largest mass protest of any kind ever staged in the United States. More than two million people participated in support of the demand that the United States withdraw its troops from Vietnam.

Various groups in Regina concerned in various ways about the war against the people of Vietnam have begun to plan their activities and actions with the date of Nov. 13 in mind.

Watch next week's PRAIRIE FIRE for their positions and further notice of activities.

* EDITORIAL: *

Bertolt Brecht, a famous poet and playwright wrote an essay in 1934, entitled "Poets Are To Tell The Truth." In this remarkable essay Brecht described certain difficulties that writers face when attempting to expose lies and ignorance.

Part of that essay reads:

"Nowadays, anyone who wishes to combat lies and ignorance and to write the truth must overcome at least five difficulties.

"He must have the courage to write the truth when truth is everywhere opposed;

"The keenness to recognize it, although it is everywhere concealed;

"The skill to manipulate it as a weapon;

"The judgement to select those in whose hands it will be effective;

"The cunning to spread the truth among such persons."

The difficulties which Brecht wrote about in 1934 still exist.

In a letter to the editor in this week's PRAIRIE FIRE a Regina high school student wrote that she was disappointed when presenting a view critical of the Canadian economy. Her argument was dismissed as propaganda and after spending some time in attempting to prove her position by referring to her documentation, she was told her sources had lied.

In an article in this week's PRAIRIE FIRE, two members of the Regina High School Students' Union complain that the content of the classes that they take are filled with lies and untruths. The article states that history textbooks used in Regina high schools largely ignore the history of the common people.

A member of the Regina Committee of American Deserters writes in this week's Exiles column that he'd been deceived about his country's purposes in the Vietnamese war;

"That the war had nothing to do with protecting freedom of any kind."

These examples indicate that some people feel very strongly that there is not a free and equal interplay of ideas in our society.

They also indicate that certain kinds of information are not accessible to the large majority of Canadians.

Karl Mannheim, a 20th century German writer, puts forward a reasonable explanation for this situation.

He writes about why some ideas remain "sacred", not to be "profaned by public debate."

Certain positions of privilege are maintained through these ideas remaining "sacred", he says.

If we are to tell the truth, can we maintain the "sacredness" of the idea that individuals should be free to own or control the means of production in order to make profits, when this freedom is used to shape reality to conform with the rise and fall of profit margins?

Can we maintain the freedom to create a society based on "exchange relationships", that reduces people to commodities which can be bought and sold according to the whims of the market?

Can we maintain a social order in which human fulfillment is denied the possibility of realization because people are forced to submit to conditions over which they have no control?

In our society people are made to feel insignificant, and are told they should leave decisions of matters that vitally affect them to the so-called experts.

Whose position of privilege is being maintained by this silence?

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

The PRAIRIE FIRE is published weekly on Tuesdays by The Regina Community Media Project, a non-profit organization. Mailing address is 2640 Angus Boulevard, Regina. Office phone is 527-8340.

STAFF THIS WEEK

Sandy Cameron

Norm Bolen

Jeff Goodman

Erna Schick

Terry Zimmer

Don Fairbairn

Mike Lloyd

Lyle Bolen

Paul Hanley

Mary June Keller

Pat Hall

Dick Perrin

Lawrence Yuristy

Jim Shugrue

Shirley Spidla

Diane Fletcher

Ray Davie

Barb Cameron

Barry Lipton

Kevin Berland

Joan Nielson

Bill Graham

Brian Gladwell

Liz Kalmakoff

Karen Perrin

Al Page

John Fagan

Ron Ruth

Pam Smith

Pat Schuett

Art Davis

Miles Clarke

UNION LABEL PENDING



LETTERS

To the Editor:
Campbell Collegiate is not ready for socialism.

In a debate we had in my Grade 11 history class on

imperialism, I was disappointed to discover that more students than I thought had fallen victim to the capitalist ideology which we are subjected to.

I tried very hard to stress with figures and tables the American exploitation of Guatemala and Venezuela.

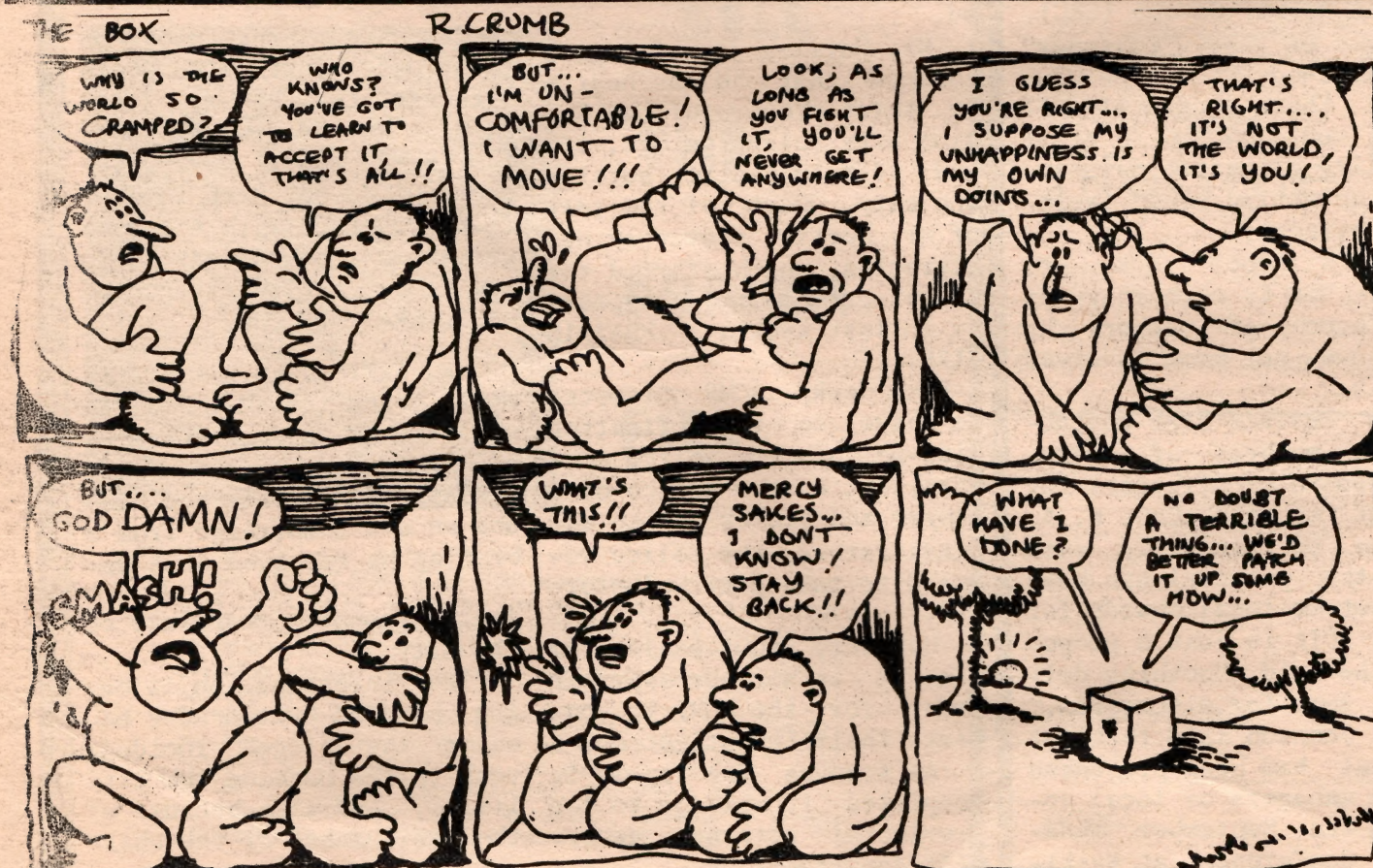
I also used Canada as an example of an imperialized country and referred to an article in last week's PRAIRIE FIRE entitled "U.S. Invades Canadian Economy".

I was told the article was propaganda and the other information only one person's views.

Even though I used the UN statistics and quoted people who are experts in this field, my classmates didn't believe me and told me that I, and my sources had lied.

I regret that due to the repressive nature of our high school system, students' minds have been closed to how capitalism operates in reality.

Jackie Davie
54 Dolphin Bay,
Regina.



"PROPER CHANNELS" INEFFECTIVE

-by Barb Cameron

Attempts to set up a co-operative day care centre on Regina Campus have been met with strong opposition by the Board of Governors and the administration of the university.

"We have tried all the proper channels and it has accomplished absolutely nothing for us," Mrs. Maija Crane, one of the organizers of the campus group said.

Mrs. Crane told the PRAIRIE FIRE that attempts to set up co-operatively run day care facilities for students, faculty, and employees of the university have been met with continued resistance from the administration of the university.

The setting up of these facilities has been approved by the Students' Representative Council at Regina Campus.

"There is a desperate need for this kind of thing on the Campus," Mrs. Crane said. "There are many students who have children and cannot afford adequate day care for them."

"A co-operative setup would be a great help to students," she said.

According to Mrs. Crane, the Regina Campus administration had initially approved the idea when it was presented to them early in the fall, but when it went to the Board of Governors of the university it was turned down.

"First we presented a brief to the SRC describing our plans and they approved of them. The thing we had to do then was to find some space."

"Space was found for us," she said, "But now we can't use it and it is just sitting there empty. It isn't even being planned for anything else."

While the group was negotiating with the administration for recognition and space, the SRC provided temporary quarters for the day care centre in the Student Service Centre, Mrs. Crane explained.

"Up to the last minute we were fully expecting to get space," she said. "The unused bookstore room on the Old Campus had been set aside for us."

"We also wanted to include the employees of the university in this plan," she said. "We felt that faculty and employees could perhaps pay something for the services but it would be as cheap as possible, especially for students."

"We wanted to operate it on a co-operative basis with



parents, students, and faculty also participating in the running of it."

When the Board of Governors met on Oct. 2, in Saskatoon, they decided not to approve of the group using the empty bookstore space.

"They said it would raise 'too many implications' for the University," Mrs. Crane said. "However we found out later the Saskatoon SRC was approached by Principal Begg of Saskatoon and offered space there to set up a day care centre."

"At that point we were left without any facilities for the children we had (about fifteen). The parents decided to move into an unused portion of the Old Campus cafeteria until something could be worked out."

"By this time we were almost at the end of our tether, but decided to try one more suggestion. The SRC met and agreed to offer to rent the room from the administration."

The parents and the SRC agreed. This might give the

administration a chance to compromise on the whole question.

This suggestion was approved by the Regina Campus Buildings and Grounds Committee, providing a satisfactory lease were drawn up.

"The whole thing seemed to be settled, but that is not the case," Mrs. Crane said. "Late last week we heard they have decided to wait until the next board (of governors) meeting (on Nov. 7) and are not even going to rent us the room now."

"Meanwhile, the children are still being supervised in the cafeteria, not the most pleasant surroundings for children."

"Judging from their past behaviour, it isn't likely the Board will grant us space. But we are still determined to keep fighting for it."

"There are many people on campus, students, faculty, and employees, who support this and agree there is a real need," Mrs. Crane said.

"We want to make it clear we aren't giving up on the whole issue."

"Students all around are being criticized for taking direct action when they see things to be done. I think our experiences with the day care centre on campus might serve as an example of how people get treated when they try and go through 'the proper channels,'" Mrs. Crane said.

EIGHT WEEK STRIKE ENDS

CO-OP WORKERS BACK ON JOB

by John Fagan

Co-op workers were back at their jobs last Thursday following 50 days of picketing at the Sherwood Co-operative stores in Regina.

The strike, which started Sept. 10, came to an end when union and management signed a new 30-month agreement retroactive to June 1, 1969.

Spokesmen for both sides expressed "general satisfaction with the new agreement" in a joint statement.

The agreement came much sooner than expected. Last week, the two sides had de-

cided to seek a neutral mediator to the dispute during labour department-sponsored conciliations.

Unable to agree on a mediator, the two sides continued to negotiate last week and finally came out with the new agreement.

Co-op employees are members of the Retail, Wholesale and Department store Union, local 539 (RWDSU).

Wages for all employees were increased. Food department workers will receive increases identical to those granted by the food monopolies to their organized employees in Regina.

Non-food workers are to receive salary boosts rang-

ing from 36 cents an hour in junior positions to a high of 54 cents in other classifications. Food store workers will continue to receive higher wages than workers in other departments.

Night shopping and shift differential wages were also included in the new contract.

Retention of workers' benefits, which had been the main objective of the union, were contained in the new agreement.

Co-op officials had wanted to keep mention of these benefits out of the contract promising to maintain them as part of "Co-op policy." Union officials said that if benefits were removed from the contract, Co-op management "would have the sole right to change such Benefit Plans as it might see fit."

Throughout the strike, the workers maintained that they would not return to work without the inclusion of the Benefit Plan in the new agreement. The benefits had been built into previous contracts for over 23 years.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR FRENCH CANADA ?

By ROBERT ISSENMAN and
PETER STARR

(Editor's note: Robert Isсенman graduated from Harvard University, in the Department of Government. He is presently at the Universite de Montreal, Faculty of Law.

Peter Starr is presently at the Universite de Montreal in the Department of Sociology.

They are covering the opposition to Bill 63 for Canadian University Press and The McGill Daily.)

(CUP)--Turmoil rocked the entire province of Quebec this past week over the issue of "language of education."

Strikes have paralysed most of the large French universities in the province. Junior colleges throughout Quebec have been hit by massive class boycotts while numerous high schools are shut down entirely.

Ten thousand students staged a spectacular non-violent march on the Montreal headquarters of the ruling Union Nationale Party on Tuesday, Oct. 28. This followed a frenzied teach-in which jammed the entire Universite de Montreal sports arena. Other demonstrations against targets such as the Montreal City Hall occurred throughout the week.

Momentum was building up rapidly for a massive confrontation before the Parliament Building in Quebec on Friday. By keeping the earlier demonstrations peaceful, leaders hoped to amass general support for the Friday action to the tune of 500,000 demonstrators.

What started out to be a peaceful demonstration, however, resulted in a night of pitched battles being fought between protestors and police riot squads armed with tear gas.

About 35,000 demonstrators gathered outside of the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City. The crowd, at that point, was angry, but their discontent was only expressed vocally.

Then the riot squad moved in despite the protesting shouts of the parade marshals. The battle was on.

The "week of protest" was sparked by the Provincial Government's attempt to introduce a bill--Bill 63--en-

abling both English Canadians and "New Canadians" to choose freely between English- and French-language education for their children.

The "language of education" issue has been building up over the last two years in Quebec, initially ignited by an educational crisis in the Montreal suburb of St. Leonard.

The freedom of Italian residents to choose English-language schooling lay at the base of that conflict. In May, 1968, a newly-elected School Commission decided to abolish all English-language public schools in the community over a period of six years. Children of "English origin" were to be bussed out of St. Leonard for their education.

The English and Italian residents of the community reacted violently to this sudden liquidation of their "fundamental rights." They refused to submit to the imposition of French-language schools and established their own classes in homes.

Spearheading the drive to abolish English-language schooling was Raymond Lemieux. His Ligue pour l'Integration Scolaire attempted to carry the "unilingualist" position to other communities in the province.

While no other St. Leonard situation has been provoked, the issue of French unilingualism has captured the imagination of French Canadian nationalists, journalists and students all over Quebec.

The unilingualists are particularly concerned that almost all immigrants to Quebec are assimilated immediately into the English language milieu. The increased flow of post-war immigration, combined with a drastically lower French birth rate, is predicted to make the French a minority in Montreal within 10 years.

The unilingualists further maintain that the French are an overwhelming majority in Quebec and should not finance an English public school system. This rationale has great emotional force because the Quebec economy is run in the English language. The unilingualists feel English schools abet this situation and threaten to relegate the French language to the kitchens and churches.

Ultimately, they fear for the survival of the French

language and culture, and for the survival of the French Canadian nation itself.

The issue has fantastic emotional power and has erupted into sprees of violence on more than one occasion. English and French students clashed during Operation McGill--last March's rally of unilingualists at English-speaking McGill University.

The nationalists chose McGill as a symbol of English domination of Quebec society. They vehemently object to Quebec Government subsidies to the English universities -- McGill, Sir George Williams, Bishop's and Loyola--while the French universities --Universite de Montreal, Sherbrooke, Laval, Universite de Quebec -- are sorely in need of funds to improve their long-neglected facilities.

Unilingualists turned out in force again in September, 1969, in another French-Italian confrontation at St. Leonard. Fights broke out between the French and Italians, and stores in the community were ransacked.

The police, who were caught by surprise, panicked and read the Riot Act. In an attempt to dampen the unilingualist fervor, the Government charged unilingualist leaders with sedition.

The atmosphere of unrest in Montreal was only intensified by the notorious riot on the night of Oct. 7, when Canadian Army troops were called in to restore order to the city.

However, organization, not violence, has been the most important characteristic emerging in the fall of this year. Since September, Raymond Lemieux has been directing a highly-successful drive to organize the students in universities, high schools, and junior colleges.

Last year the mobilization of Quebec students was centred around internal school politics. But this year the students are reacting to the "national" question.

According to Romeo Bouchard, an influential student editor, "The spontaneous confrontation that emerges from these students is moving enough to change Quebec society."

Indeed, the remarkable control demonstrated by 10,000 impassioned students on

last Tuesday night's confrontation at the Union Nationale's Renaissance Club appears to confirm their fervent dedication to the unilingualist cause.

The attempt by the Government to grant "freedom of choice in education" under Bill 63 has dramatically catalysed the unilingualist movement. It appears to have created a common front between workers and students.

Overnight, the radical dream of students and workers united in a struggle against a common enemy has come closer to realization in Quebec than anywhere else in North America.

The Front de Quebec Francais, formed two weekends ago, brought together the leaders of unions, parent-teacher organizations, nationalist societies and student groups.

The union groups alone represent at least 500,000 workers under such giants as the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Conseil Syndicale Nationale, and the Corporation des Enseignants de Quebec. Support from the students is also extremely strong.

At last Tuesday's teach-in at the Universite de Montreal, prominent labor leader Michel Chartrand said, "Bill 63 is an excellent bill because it unites the French Canadian nation. The Union Nationale Party could never better serve the French Canadian people than by what it is doing with Bill 63.

"It will create solidarity in the French Canadian nation," he continued. "It will unite the workers. It will unite the students and the farmers. We could never have dreamed of an occasion like this."

Even if the Quebec Government miraculously comes up with a solution to the language of education and immigrant issues, the struggle has only begun.

The fundamental basis of the conflict in Quebec is economic. "Language of work" and the economic discrepancies between English and French-speaking Quebecois will inevitably emerge as the gut issue.

The strength of the worker-student bonds forged in the last week will be crucial in the forthcoming contests. Last Friday's demonstration could have provided the key to the future of Quebec.

HIGH SCHOOLS CRITICIZED

The following is a statement given to The PRAIRIE FIRE by two members of the Regina High School Students' Union; they are Paul Hanley of Miller High School, and Erna Schick of Campbell. Members of the Board of Education will be asked to reply to the statement for the PRAIRIE FIRE next week.

Canada's working class and farmers have, over the past 100 years achieved the ideal of universal education for their children. High school was once a reserve of the wealthy, now the vast majority receive at least 10 to 12 years of education. Is this education serving the best interests of Canada's working people?

In Regina, 10,000 people attend high school. Five days a week, 200 days a year these people are influenced by the learning process; their outlook and perspectives are molded in these schools more than anywhere else. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary that correct ideas and outlooks are taught in the best possible environment.

To the student, high school means their complete domination as an individual to the authoritarian rules and regulations imposed by governments, school boards and administrations isolated from the students and the community.

There are hundreds of rules, rules for anything and everything. These rules are for the most part petty, but they add up to a lot of cramping of the individual's independence and creativity. They are not necessary to keep a school running. In fact, they stunt the students' growth instead of promoting their maturation.

Every student is given a handbook, a booklet containing all the rules for everything, rules like the following that Miller students must adhere to:

"Dress regulations: 'Students will wear acceptable business attire.' 'Girls, three choices: a) skirt, weskit, white blouse. b) skirt long sleeve weskit, white blouse. c) skirt, white sweater, white blouse.'"

"Gum chewing...is not accepted business behavior and therefore will not be acceptable here."

"Hair will be kept at acceptable business standards; no beards, mustaches, etc. allowed."

Rules like this are petty, but then why do they exist? Must young people conform to standards in direct opposition to those of the present youth culture? And why business standards -- very few students become businessmen, most become workers.

Sale or distribution of political and critical literature is banned from all public and separate schools, unless the literature is in agreement with the status quo.

Student representative councils are usually hand-picked by the administration. In schools where a certain amount of freedom to run for SRC is allowed, candidates are often manipulated out of elections through smear campaigns, etc. led by teachers. However the SRC is allowed no real power in running the school anyway. The facts show that schools are neither free nor democratic.

The course content of classes is filled with lies and untruths. They consistently present a warped perspective of reality. This is particularly true of Social Studies, a course which receives great emphasis.

Kings, lords, dictators and prime ministers make the history of the world, according to the text books. The masses of the people are unimportant -- the slaves, the serfs and the lowly workers are rarely considered. Conservatism is always championed, rebellion and change are frowned upon.

An example of this is the treatment of the organizations of the working class, the trade unions.

In a history book presently being used in Regina's schools, "The Modern World", by C.F. Strong, the author supports the fascist dictatorship in Portugal.

The regime is called "creative", it prohibits strikes and lockouts, and institutionalized compulsory arbitration in all labour disputes, it suppresses agitation and liberty and is therefore good. Socialist movements are called "viruses". Fortunately, says



Strong, the world has the United States to protect us from this disease.

Other courses express similar ideas in more subtle ways. But every course acts as a camouflage on the true nature of society, and in this way, brainwashes the people to love the system that is exploiting and oppressing them.

Canada is a class society wherein one class, big business, owns the country and the other classes, workers, farmers and small business, does the productive work. In order for big business to continue their domination and control over the productive forces, they must control the minds of the other classes.

The educational system is the greatest and most important way of doing their brainwashing. So the big business political parties and their governmental bureaucracies set up an educational system which through its structures and content, molds the people to love and worship the monopoly capitalist system.

But the interests of the working class and all peoples dominated by monopoly capital is to expose the truth about history and society in order that they can change the world. The educational system does not serve the interests of the people, it opposes their interests. It must be replaced with a democratic community controlled system.

C.C.C. STILL ACTIVE

The strike settlement at Sherwood Co-op Association will not end the efforts of members to have a special membership meeting called.

The Committee of Concerned Co-operatives will be meeting this week to consider the situation now in view of the strike settlement.

Two meetings called by the committee have a clear mandate from the largest turnout of members in years to seek the membership meeting, and if necessary, to take action in the courts to have the Board of Directors of Sherwood call the special membership meeting.

One committee member said that the ending of the strike has not removed any of the reasons outlined in the two petitions for calling the meeting. The member said that it is expected the committee is going to continue to ask for the meeting. "That is what the meetings of Concerned Co-operators wanted," he stated.

The committee has informed the Board of the second

petition which was signed by Sherwood members along with affidavits witnessed by a commissioner of oaths.

The committee member said that the Board will be given a reasonable time limit to reply and take steps to call the membership meeting. If the Board continues to ignore the members' request, as with the earlier petition, the committee then will probably take the issue to the courts.

The petition specifically requests the Board to inform the meeting of the management of Sherwood from immediately before the strike to date.

The petition also asks for an explanation of Sherwood's relationship to Federated Co-operative Limited and discussion of the democratic principles of the Co-operative.

Co-op principles and their labour relations policy, and for the Board to explain why they refused to comply with the first petition are other points in the petition.

SFU AND STUDENTS

- by Gisele Toupin

As an experimental educational program the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union hired ten students as full-time organizers for the summer. The Saskatchewan Farmers' Union, as a voluntary membership organization, employed the students to canvas parts of Saskatchewan to reinforce and rebuild their membership.

The program was structured so that we could learn through first hand experience the conditions facing the Canadian wheat farmer.

The Saskatchewan Farmers' Union's program is to seek, through collective bargaining, a stable price for farm produce and a lowering of operating costs.

The farmers feel that individual and political action has failed. They feel they must speak collectively as an interest group striving to maintain their livelihood.

The role we played, as organizers, was to canvas different districts and sub-districts in the province.

The area where we concentrated most of our time was

in S. F. U. District 2 in south central Saskatchewan where we were based in Assiniboia.

Throughout the summer we "systematically" canvassed and spoke to the majority of farmers in that area, which had previously had large farm union support. In past years, however, membership and participation had declined.

Many farmers were skeptical about the farm union being able to aid them out of their economic misery, but tended to agree that there was hardly any alternative.

On that basis, plus the fact the S.F.U. was becoming a national organization, many farmers decided to give the Union a try for at least one year.

The label "union" tended to deter people from joining the S.F.U.

Unions, in their eyes, had much to do with the fact that their wheat was not being sold. Trade unions strikes, which usually occur during the crucial wheat shipping times, were blamed

as the cause for the lack of wheat sales.

The important things we stressed in trying to explain this dilemma were the underlying economic conditions, eg. pricing policies of big business, which caused workers to strike and farmers' wheat sales to decline.

It was emphasized that labourers and farmers were being oppressed by the same sectors of society, and that to combat this oppression an alliance had to be formed.

Farmers are beginning to realize that they can no longer scratch out a proper income from their family farm, that they are being forced to invest more and more money, yet are not being rewarded.

Corporate farming is becoming a reality. Farmers are being forced to sell their land.

The only question is where do unskilled labourers find jobs in the towns or cities when there already is 5% unemployment in these areas?

Yet the farmers are prepared to wage a battle. They

realize as individuals their voice is not a very loud one but as a group they have a much better chance to bargain for their rights.

Farmers proved this summer in their tractor demonstrations that they were willing to fight. They had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

By demonstrating, they proved their willingness to work collectively at solving their problems. This spirit of collectivization is demonstrated by Laurie Calimonté, an S.F.U. Youth Organizer, as follows:

"The newly-founded National Farmers' Union is now facing a question which is crucial -- so crucial that its resolution will determine the whole future of the organization. The question is simply this: "Democracy or Autocracy?"

The leaders of the NFU agree that it is absolutely essential that the union be a truly democratic organization, and they are determined to make it so. This decision has significant implications.

It means that farmers must become involved in a process which must in turn lead to an increased involvement in meetings, policy making, discussion of alternatives, and collective action.

The final, and most important, implication is that the strength of the union must not depend on a charismatic leader, but on the conscious, committed participation of every member.

This is to be brought about by de-centralizing power and authority. Farmers will do research in their own communities (eg. getting the facts on costs of production for machinery, chemicals, etc.) and on other areas of vital interest to every farmer.

This will lead to an increased consciousness of their position and the nature of their oppression.

Efforts are also being made to involve women and young people in more meaningful ways, so that they will begin to question their situation.

The NFU intends to play a major role in the education of the farming population and in the development of organized resistance."

The National Farmers' Union has in its organization the structure to enable farmers to determine their own agricultural policy.

They can debate in their local unions the problems they are facing provincially and nationally and can use the NFU as a tool to implement their ideas.

Workers World

Being a member of the medical profession can be a very frustrating experience.

As one registered nurse now working at the Grey Nuns Hospital put it, "we have to work under supervisors and administrators who don't know what a hospital is. If they had worked in a hospital as a nurse or an orderly for a few years, they might understand the situation better, but what do they know if they've been in school all their lives."

The source of this kind of frustration was well illustrated this year at the Grey Nuns when a head nurse ordered two new beds for her ward, since there was money left over in the budget.

This was before it was known that the government would not be picking up this year's deficit.

It was suggested that she also order a desk for herself. In spite of the fact that she felt this was unnecessary, one was ordered anyway. When the hospital realized it would have to cut down on expenditures, the two needed beds were considered unnecessary but she got the desk which wasn't needed or wanted in the first place.

An orderly commented that the government should not

come through with more money but investigate how this money was being spent.

For example, at the Grey Nuns, all the front offices and the X-ray labs, which are a branch of administration, have air-conditioning, while a group of physicians had to get together and out of their own pockets, but an air-conditioning system for an operating room.

Another nurse said, "it's the big shots, who can afford private rooms, who get their lights answered first, then they can go home and tell everyone what wonderful service they received."



"Yet usually we can barely attend to everyone as we should, and a newly admitted patient may have to wait for hours before we can do anything for him."

"There are times when I feel I stop being a nurse and become a machine."

"The constant supervision only makes things worse. Supervisors have never had to care for patients, so of course they don't have any idea of what it is like, yet they try to tell us how to do our jobs."

A nurse in fact, spends more time doing things not directly related to patient care. For example, doctors are the first ones to complain about the lack of bedside nursing. Yet, they do not seem to realize how much time is taken doing charts, which they insist must be done.

A patient going into the hospital is grateful for any kind of care he gets, but he doesn't realize what kind of care he should be getting.

Now, with the great majority of staff being new grads, with slight ward experience, it has become necessary to use experienced nurses to teach the new grads on the wards what they should already know.

- NAMES WITHHELD BY REQUEST

HOSPITAL WORKERS STRIKE

"Hospital wages in Saskatchewan are at poverty levels or lower," Norman Simon, director of public relations for the Canadian Union of Public Employees, said in an interview with The Prairie Fire.

Mr. Simon was referring to the situation which drove 90 non-professional employees of the Estevan Hospital out on strike. Hospital management refused to meet union recommendations for pay increases, even though these demands had been unanimously agreed upon by a Conciliation Board.

The picketers, members of CUPE, are remaining on the picket line from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

A cavalcade of about 25-30 people representing the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' Union, and other unions came to Estevan to support the hospital workers on the first day of the strike.

The Board which conciliated the strike consisted of a management nominee, a union nominee and an independent chairman. It was set up at the insistence of hospital management, according to Mr. Simon.

The management pushed for this board when the Provincial Government stepped into the dispute to avert an earlier strike planned for June 9. The union postponed its

WORKERS FEEL THE HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT PRECIPITATED THE STRIKE BY REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONCILIATION BOARD THAT MANAGEMENT INSISTED ON.

strike action when the government asked the two parties to talk and the hospital pressed for conciliation.

Negotiations had been going on for the past two to three years. It took all this time for the union to decide to strike, and then the union delayed its initial strike decision when it became clear there would be conciliation.

"The union has tried hard to compromise with management and to propose reasonable wage increases," Mr. Simon said.

But when the Board's recommendations were turned down by hospital management, the union decided to go on strike on Oct. 23.

Management had offered to meet union wage demands for an increase from \$1.58 to \$2.02 an hour, but only beginning Oct. 1, 1970. The union demand was that this increase be on a retroactive basis.

Striking workers include orderlies, nurses' aides, clerk typists, boiler men and kitchen staff.

Until Friday, Oct. 24, these workers faced a Provincial government threat to invoke the Essential Services Emergency Act. Premier Thatcher stated he would not use this power, unless health care at the hospital deteriorates markedly.

Workers feel, however, that the threat of invoking this bill still exists. It would force the union to discontinue the strike or face fines of up to \$1000 a day.

As far as the hospital workers are concerned, forcing them back to work and setting up another board to settle the dispute would be a waste of time, since the Conciliation Board has already considered the issues and recommended in favour of the union's demands.

Workers feel the hospital management precipitated the strike by refusing to accept the recommendations of the very board it insisted on, Mr. Simon said.

They further feel the government would have no right to invoke its stop-strike powers, since the workers do not regard the services they perform as emergency or as essential.

In fact, they have carefully avoided interfering with any emergency services performed by the hospital since they began the strike.

According to Mr. Simon, "Premier Thatcher is not likely to invoke the Essential Services Emergency Act to end the strike unless he can't help it.

"This whole affair has been badly mishandled by the government, and it would make them look pretty stupid if the Bill were invoked."

Health Minister Grant last week offered to supplement the hospital's current budget with \$8,000. This is to be added to a 6% extra grant announced by the government previously. This is only 1.5% above the usual supplemental grant which provincial hospitals have come to expect as a result of recurring operating deficits.

Unfortunately, however, according to Mr. Simon, both the percentage increase and the promised \$8,000 are insufficient to cover the hospital's rising costs and also meet workers' wage needs.

The hospital would need at least \$16,000--not \$8,000--to meet these needs.

Mr. Simon termed the offer of \$8,000 "political doubletalk."

According to Mrs. Inga Colbow, president of CUPE Local No. 80 for the Estevan workers, strikers' morale is high. It is fed by a good deal of indignation at the government.

Workers feel the government is trying to turn the public against them, when it should be concentrating on finding money to run its hospitals at capacity and with decent wage levels.

Similar wage conditions in the Humboldt, Prince Albert and about seven other hospitals in the province have led locals there to consider or actually plan strike actions. Workers in the first two hospitals have already voted, almost unanimously, to strike if their demands remain unmet.

In the remaining hospitals, supplements to the 1969 budgets have still not been decided on. As many as 1,000 non-essential workers could be involved in these strikes.



Art Davis is one of the American deserters that has contributed to the writing of this column for the past four weeks. He is a member of the Regina Committee of American Deserters. This is his story.

On Sept. 27, 1967, at the age of 16, I enlisted in the U.S. Army. At that age I had little concern with politics or people. My main concern was a search for my own identity.

I was tired of being tied down at home, and thought that by enlisting I would at least gain independence from my parents. As I found later I had entered a strictly regimented, authoritarian environment.

Knowing little about the army, I thought I could gain manhood. What I did not know was that I would be forced to give up my individuality and become a robot, enslaved to be a licensed murderer.

This seems to be a grim description of the army, but it is accurate. The misery begins in Basic Combat Training, which drags out for 2 months and includes training in bayonet tactics hand-to-hand combat, and the use of hand grenades.

This was my life-style for 19 months, most of which was spent in Korea. It was

there I learned to hate the army and became aware of what was happening to me.

I realized the most vital part of myself, my individuality, was taken away. Conformity was relentlessly enforced by 'dog Sergeants' constantly barking orders.

The result was a nervous breakdown.

I explained to my psychiatrist that I just wanted to return to civilian life.

After returning to the U.S., I was told I was to be sent to Vietnam. I knew I would have to put the 'kill tactics' learned in basic training into practice.

I had realized by this time that the U.S. was in Vietnam only to protect its economic interests in Asia.

I concluded the war had nothing to do with freedom of any kind.

I was expected to kill for the Fords and the Rockefellers.

The only reaction I had was to desert. I no longer wanted to be part of the war effort.

DAY CARE

- by BARB CAMERON

This is the second of a series of articles on day care in Regina. Those readers with personal experiences in this area are invited to write or phone The PRAIRIE FIRE at 527-8340 with their information. There are many people in the city anxious to organize some kind of facilities for their children. If you are interested in getting in touch with these people let us know.

Although there is a proven need for more and better facilities for the care of children of working parents, not much is being done about it.

What is the reason for this?

It has been suggested that a lack of public understanding on this issue is one of the main reasons why there is apparent apathy about the subject.

Many people do not know what is meant by the term "day care". It is often confused with nursery school or babysitting service.

"Day care" means much more than either of these two things.

The Welfare League of America has defined day care in the following way:

"A day care centre is a place where a pre-school child has an opportunity to learn through play with oth-

er children and with appropriate toys and materials;

Where his mental, emotional, and physical growth is fostered; and where nutritious food, health supervision, medical care, rest and activity are provided as needed."

But more importantly it is a place where parents can each day leave their children and thus share their care and upbringing with the staff of such a centre.

But the public may well ask why it is so important to provide these facilities to pre-school children when there is a public school system which will supposedly meet these needs when the child is five or six?

First there is the obvious need for providing some kind of care for those families where the mother is unable to remain home with the children because she must work or because she is alone.

But more important, there is the question of the quality of care and experience the child will get eight

hours a day, five days a week, while the parents are away.

"Day care" should not be confused with simply custodial care, or merely keeping the child from bodily harm.

It is felt by most child experts that custodial care is likely to neglect the emotional and intellectual needs of the child to a grave degree, although it may be satisfying a child's physical needs completely.

In a brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a Vancouver group states that recent psychological knowledge indicates the years of infancy and early childhood to be most important in human development and also those where the richest learning experience takes place.

The brief also argues that day care is one of the most important and essential social services which a society can provide its members.

"It can be a means of holding together a family which is in danger of break-up. To the family on welfare it can provide the opportunity for training or educa-

tion necessary to ensure economic independence."

"It can help offset the stultifying effects of poverty, ignorance and deprivation, so often repeated endlessly from generation to generation."

This kind of facility can also promote the healthy development of children, physically socially and intellectually during the years when problems are most likely to arise and can be most easily dealt with, according to the brief.

A further argument presented for the necessity of these services is that its cost is much lower than the cost of services society provides its adult members such as jails, mental hospitals and special treatment centres.

If good day care facilities were provided in these early years, there would not be the same need for later "rehabilitation", states the brief.

"The Unemployed Mother in America", a book by Hoffman and Nye argues that if parents can be freed from the anxiety of not knowing their children are being properly cared for and if children are receiving good care, the fact of parents working full time outside the home has no detrimental bearing on a child's healthy adjustment to life.

CLASSIFIEDS

Good buy on 1965 Ford 2-door hardtop, automatic, low mileage. Phone 536-8805, evenings.

69 Roadrunner, Platinum with black vinyl top, 4 speed, Tach, Positive traction, power brakes, radio, Ram-air, Phone 536-6362, evenings - 33 Lake St.

(The PRAIRIE FIRE will accept classified ads from anyone in the city. The cost is \$1 per column inch--minimum charge, \$1. Call our office at 527-8340 on Thursday or Friday afternoons to get an ad placed in the following week's paper.)



**SELL
THE
PRAIRIE
FIRE**

THE PRAIRIE FIRE NEEDS YOU! We need intelligent, handsome, upstanding young men and women to help us get our newspaper to the most people in Regina. Young men and women who will sell The PRAIRIE FIRE on street corners, in shopping centres, at factories and offices, at school, or door-to-door.

Help us bring back the tradition of the corner newspaper boy. Help us get this new paper out to people. Help yourself on the road to fame and riches. FOR EACH COPY OF THE PRAIRIE FIRE YOU SELL--15¢--YOU KEEP A NICKEL!

Come to 180 Angus Cresc. Wednesday, Thursday or Friday afternoon to sign up and get your PRAIRIE FIRES!

SUPPORT

YOUR COMMUNITY

NEWSWEEKLY

4 months	\$3.00
1 year	\$8.00
lifetime	\$150

The Prairie Fire is founded on the belief that people in the city of Regina need and want an alternative press. Please support us, and subscribe today.

MAIL TO: THE REGINA COMMUNITY MEDIA PROJECT
2640 ANGUS BOULEVARD
REGINA, SASK.

SEND ME:

____ 4 months, 16 issues, \$3.00 ____ 1 year, 52 issues, \$8.00

____ a lifetime, \$150.00

Payment enclosed _____

Bill me _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____